

Address delivered by Hon. John E. Fogarty, MC at the Flag Day Exercises held by the Fraternal Order of Elks at Providence, R.I. on Sunday, June 15, 1947

It is a great pleasure to join with this Lodge of Elks in paying tribute to the flag of our country. The great Fraternal Order of Elks is to be congratulated for the emphasis it places on these annual services in honor of humanity's greatest National Emblem.

It might seem to some cynics that we overdo our pride in our country when we go to such lengths to express our respect and love for this piece of fabric which we feel stands for so much.

But - there have been national emblems all through the ages. There were the eagles, perched atop the standards which led Roman armies to conquest of most of the known world. There were the pennants of chivalrous knights and the Flag of the cross which led the Crusaders across Europe to the walls of the Holy City. All these inspired their followers with great zeal - because they represented some intangible thing that caused a man's heart to beat a little faster - his blood to course more swiftly through his veins; instilled in him greater confidence in the cause for which he fought.

In the early days of the colonies several standards were created - not merely to identify one group from another; but to symbolize the growing strength and faith in the belief that these colonies could and should stand alone.

Out of that faith there grew those concepts of society and government which became the foundation of this Republic - and to symbolize those concepts there came into being the Stars and Stripes as the emblem of the newest creature among the world's family of Nations.

That flag inspired the minute men and the patriots of Rhode Island and all the colonies to super-human efforts. Pitting their meager resources against the wealth and power of the Empire which then was the world's greatest - they won through to victory and established here on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Our Republic has been assailed many times since. In its early beginnings it was threatened by several world powers. And history records there were times when some of its strongest sons knew despair.

It has been attacked by forces of arms. Its own children have slain one another. It has been assailed by the devastating, withering decay of financial and economic disorders. But always it has stood, strong and resolute - the land of the free and the home of the brave.

It has prospered and grown - in stature and power - until today the greatest flag in all the world - flies over earth's greatest nation.

We have come a long way since the founding fathers first declared America's freedom. With the power and wealth and position this nation has gained - it should be possible to predict that soon we would be above the threat of any danger.

But, those same founding fathers who charted our early course - proclaimed that never would this nation be free from danger of destruction. They warned us we must be eternally vigilant if we would continue to enjoy the priceless heritage which is ours.

And today - all over this land - wherever Flag Day Exercises are being held, I venture to say there is but one central theme; and that a call which goes out to every citizen to maintain that vigilance - to

refortify that love of country - without which the institutions we cherish will not be safe.

It seems at times but a few hours ago that we were wild with rejoicing because the bloodiest conflict in history's knowledge had been brought to a victorious conclusion. Then again there are times when it seems it could not have happened - it could not have occurred in our time - when we view with distress and concern - the sorry state of this battered and bleeding mortal sphere.

During the war years the enemies of Fascism were as one. All the might and power and wealth we could muster were placed in the hands of our allies - to the end that we might put down the despotism which threatened to engulf the world.

We fought that war - with every possible ounce of energy - every possible dollar we could raise - and every necessary youth as well. We fought to preserve liberty and freedom abroad - because we were convinced it was necessary that we do so in order to safeguard freedom and security here at home.

We altered our outlook on world affairs because of this need.

The people of this Nation made great sacrifices during the war - and since its conclusion we have contributed liberally toward the easing of the suffering and misery and devastation it left in its wake. We have asked nothing in the way of plunder and aggrandizement for ourselves.

We have asked only that the practices of aggression must cease as a national policy and that nations are to be politically free within the framework of a world organization capable of guaranteeing justice and peace

and security to the homes of all the peoples of the world. But, as we witnessed the enemies of this Republic stagger under the crushing blows of our valiant fighting men - some of us began to entertain fears that all of our allies did not respect their pledges - did not appreciate the sincerity with which we offered our all in the cause of International order.

Most of us have been caused deep concern because we find that our ideals have been taken advantage of. While we have been occupied with feeding the starving - caring for the maimed and injured - and striving to restore the life-blood of war-ravaged peoples everywhere, we have been forced to witness a war-time ally draining off the wealth in material resources and man power of nations which have been reduced to the state of impotency by the deprivations of conquering armies.

Peoples who have already known all the horrors of war and tyranny are subjected to new abuses, because our former ally has found it profitable to create chaos wherever she cannot readily exercise control.

The functioning of a world organization in which we have placed so much hope is brought to a standstill. Just treaties cannot be executed and the world of middle Europe sinks deeper and deeper into the quagmire of chaos and despair.

This is the situation on this Flag Day of 1947. Just a few days since we paid our solemn tribute to the dead of all our wars; since we acknowledged our sincere gratitude to the brave who have come home and the dead who sleep forever under crosses which dot the landscape in every clime.

Instead of welcoming this day as the dawn of a new era; instead of being able to thank Heaven that our fears are still, our troubles all

behind us, we must again rally our strength and our determination to see to it America's brave have not committed folly in offering their lives for a cause we believed to be a noble one.

During the war years we put aside many of our individual notions in order to form a solid front in defense of American traditions and ideals. That we must do again. We must demonstrate that this proud nation did not rise in its righteous anger to put down one form of despotism only to make it simple for another to forge chains on the ankles of free men.

The principles for which we fought have not yet been made secure.

They were worthy of our greatest efforts then - they are worthy of our greatest efforts now. We must determine we shall not allow those principles to be compromised further. It is our solemn obligation - not only because we are members of the human family - but it is our solemn obligation to the men who fought and died to demonstrate to the world that we shall never condone any tampering with the freedom of independent nations - or the rights of its citizens.

For that we have stood once - for that we must continue to stand.

The flag we honor today is the hope of countless millions. To betray their hope and trust in us - is to betray that flag and make a mockery of the service we conduct here today.